12/31/70

Dear Ed,

Although I may not mail it immediately, I do want to acknowledge and respond to your 12/28 while it is still fresh in my mind.

We have little on no quarrel about Garrison's book. Even that cannot really be called his, unless the crap the Boxleys and Turners fed him was feedback, which is quite possible.

Even the Chicago phone call may not be as represented. I did a slight check on this, evaluating it as you did, and found it is not the phone of a person but of an apartment house that can reasonable be presumed to be a large one or part of a complex. In addition, if I recall the earlier version of this story, one of the calls was not from N.C. but from St. Louis.

Interviews? You don't have to tell me. On my first trip there, 4/67, I arranged one with three reporters with whom he had been feuding , who kept their date, and I did the introducing, and also for one who didn't keep it, Rick Townley. Then there is Playboy, WFAA, LAFreep, etc.

One of the reasons I predicted to Oser and Alford they couldn't win and didn't deserve to, and one that I left rather than remain through the trial, is that rubbish of Oswald being both innocent and conspirator.

Here I'm just guessing, but I believe the only one of the cast of villains you list (incomplete as it is!) that may have originated with Jim is Novel. I can trace each of the others to a specific person, some to a particular misconstruction, even to the most extreme of the right extreme. He got both Vietnam and Cuba from me and never understood either, the former the nights of 4/30 and 5/1/67 and the latter from my published work. Dean Andrews told me that Jim threw a copy of WHITEWASH on his desk and told him to read it a month before Jim acknowledges his investigation began -and that Jim then told him he was investigating. Jim said he hadn't yet gotten the idea. Take your choice.

We disagree on Bethell, who is one of the laziest and in this kind of work incompetent man you'll ever find. I know him well and have some responsibility for his being in the position in which he was. He is so involved that he can't be dispassionate and he is so incompetent he can't evaluate-even doesn't understand. He has writen his book, did it long ago. I understand from one who read it that it is literary chickenshit-one who is his friend. I hate to think who the one who can write "the definitive account of the bizzare quest" is, for he has too much to do that he cannot do. However, if it is ever written, I believe you can expect the title to be LEMMING.

Thanls for your many kindnesses. Have a good year. And, if you read the Kirkwood book, let me know if you think it possible he may, inadvertently, have provided any leads. You should know there is independent confirmation of the existence of a Clay Bertrand, by the way, gotten and hidden by the FBI, I have it.

Sincerely,